

Capen's 'Oölogy of New England.\*—Under this title Mr. Capen has published a handsome volume, illustrating in color the eggs of our New England birds. It is a work which will, no doubt, be welcomed by many who are interested in egg-collecting, and they will find these colored illustrations of great assistance in the identification of specimens. Short descriptions of the eggs and nests are given, together with notes on the breeding habits of the species.

We wish that the author had given his authority for including among the birds *known* to breed in New England, such species as *Empidonax acadicus*, *Polioptila cærulea*, and *Thryothorus ludovicianus*, while omitting others, such as *Plectrophenax nivalis* and *Lanius borealis*.

The typography and general appearance of the book is excellent, the plates especially being far better than colored lithographs usually are.—C. B. C.

Nests and Eggs of the Birds of Ohio.—We have a double number of this great work, which maintains the high character of which we have often spoken already. It is Parts 21 and 22, pp. 235-286, pll. lxi-lxvi. Of the six plates, three are devoted to various eggs, chiefly of water birds, and birds of prey without nests. Of those with nests, pl. lxi represents *Lanius virco flavifrons* and *Helminthophaga chrysoptera*; pl. lxx, *Seiurus auricapillus*; pl. lxxi, *Parus atricapillus*.—E. C.

Mrs. Miller's 'Bird-Ways.†—Few more delightful bird-books have appeared than Mrs. Miller's 'Bird-Ways,' it being of equal interest to the bird-lover and the specialist. In style it is simply admirable, from the purity and simplicity of its diction. The book is made up largely of articles previously published in the 'Atlantic' and other magazines, but contains several papers not before printed. Mrs. Miller is a genuine bird-lover, intelligent and accurate in her observations, whether of birds in the aviary or in the field. Many of her sketches relate to some of our native birds kept as household pets, and include the Robin, the Wood Thrush, the Catbird, the Red-winged Blackbird, and the Baltimore Oriole. There is also a chapter on the European Song Thrush, while no less than five are devoted to the European House Sparrow, which latter have the following headings: 'A Russian in Feathers,' 'A Tragedy in the Maple-tree,' 'Trouble in the Honeysuckles,' 'The Bird of the Street,' and 'These are your Brothers.' In these are well depicted the character and domestic life of this discordant and now unwelcome denizen of our streets and parks. The chapter on the Robin is suggestively headed 'The Bird of the Morning'; the two chapters on the Wood Thrush are entitled respectively 'The Bird of Solitude,' and 'A Gentle Spirit,' while the Red-winged Blackbird is 'The Bird of

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\*Oölogy of New England; a description of the Eggs, Nests and Breeding Habits of the Birds known to breed in New England, with colored illustrations of their Eggs. By Edwin A. Capen. Boston, 1886, 4to., pp. 116, pll. xxv.

†Bird-Ways. By Olive Thorne Miller. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1885. 16mo., pp. viii, 227.

Society.' These felicitous titles indicate the character of the sketches, which are based on personal experience and observations.

The present little volume forms a fitting addition to its publishers' previous trio of bird-books, namely, Torrey's 'Birds in the Bush,' and Burroughs's 'Wake Robin' and 'Birds and Poets,' either of which it easily rivals in interest and literary merit.—J. A. A.

**The 'Water Birds of North America'—Explanations.**—In the April number of 'The Auk,' III, p. 266, Mr. Ridgway has undertaken to "rectify" some of my corrections of the above work made in the January number (III, p. 124), and asks for certain explanations. It is unfortunate that remarks intended by me to be complimentary, and purely for the advancement of the science, should be so misconstrued as to lead to discourteous and almost personal criticism; but while disavowing the least intention to be unjust to the authors and compilers, I must insist on the right to give facts, even if contrary to their statements, and to let the public form their own opinions as to the points in dispute. Mr. Ridgway calls my article "a long list of so-called corrections." There are really less than thirty items given by me from the perusal of two quarto volumes of more than 700 pages, showing *prima facie* but little to correct. Many (14) of the items are typographical or proof-reader's errors, which need correction. Eight items are "additional observations," which I mention as such rather than corrections, although mostly called for by the omission of Dr. Brewer to quote them while compiling a work intended to comprise the whole history of the birds as then known. The corrections I make relating to the writings of others are all typographical, except those given below, and Dr. Brewer's omissions.

I now proceed to answer Mr. Ridgway's questions and "rectifications" of his own portion of the work, hoping to satisfy him and all others as to the facts.

**Mareca americana.** Widgeon.—The authority for the fact that the Widgeon does not breed in the United States is the history given in Vol. I, p. 522-524, where it is quoted as breeding abundantly in British America, "but only rarely in the extreme northern parts of the United States," without giving any instance of the last-named kind. Mr. Ridgway's specimens, though published eight years previously, are not referred to—a strange omission.

I must, however, confess here to a blunder of my own, which is, that I should have given *Elthya americana*, the Red Head, as mentioned by Dr. Heermann, among the Ducks breeding in Sacramento Valley, California, not the Widgeon. No one else seems to have found it breeding south of Lat. 42°.

**Pelecanus californicus** Ridgw.—This being a little-known form I ventured to give some facts as to specimens I collected at San Diego, without any intention to "discredit" its distinctness as a *species*, but I will now assert that its claims to that distinction seem very slight. Its larger size is in accordance with the local variations of many other birds, and the